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Date: MAR 11 1964

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Sweeping Probe Needed

Have the Communists and fellow-travelers infiltrated U. S. government agencies including the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency?

Several reports have come to light in recent weeks which put a critical and disturbing spotlight on this question. The very security of our country demands that the full facts be brought to light.

The reports may provide the seeds to an answer of a long-standing question of what has been wrong with our foreign policy.

One contains the revelation of a secret document which reportedly had been kept hidden by the State Department for the past 7½ years. It listed more than 800 potential security risks in that agency in 1956 when it was prepared by former State Department Security Chief Scott McLeod, who has since died. Curiously this report was completed only 18 months after the late Senator Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin was formally condemned for his rough one-man campaign to expose Red infiltration of the State Department.

And significantly, within one year after preparing the report, Mr. McLeod was relieved of his security post and bounced upstairs by the way of an appointment to Ireland.

Only last week the State Department, shaken by these persistent reports of Red infiltration in its world-wide apparatus, began a top-secret review of some 175 of its most trusted officers. The investigation (State Department officials avoid use of this odious word) is being undertaken with great reluctance, authoritative observers say, and only after the disclosures aroused apprehension in the Johnson Administration about the possibility of a "spy scandal" in a presidential year.

About the same time the same congressmen began to voice an uneasiness about the nation's security. Yuri Nossenko, an important Russian secret police official who defected in Geneva last month, has put the finger on at least five spy rings, one reputedly in a highly sensitive U.S. agency.

Recently Henry J. Taylor, a former U.S. ambassador to Switzerland and one of the nation's most respected newspaper columnists who is not prone to deal in rumors, raised a warning flag to the American people of possible Communist infiltration of our government.

Here's what Mr. Taylor wrote in part:

"On Feb. 27, 1963, 11 long and decisive months ago, this column (Taylor's) detailed Castro's push into Panama and said 'His receiving agent, protector and cover there is the famous Panamanian Communist Thelma King--vicious, relentless and competent.'

"On Jan. 10, 1964 Thelma King personally led 1,000 rioters to the National Guard headquarters demanding weapons. Yet our government says the canal events were a surprise, surprise, surprise.

"At least 70 known Castroites spearheaded the attack, of which about 40 recently visited Cuba, the Soviet Union and Red China."

"Among them, Cuba-trained Floyd Britton led the march on Balboa High School and subsequent shooting of our ambushed troops.

"This is the same man, no less, who instigated the demonstrations against our Panama City embassy as long ago as 1955 and captained Castro's guerrilla assaults on interior Panamanian villages in 1959, an official of the Communist Party. Surprise, surprise, surprise.

"Virginia Ramires, the chief of Castro's women's affiliate, Carlos Nunez, Cleto and Ruben Scuza, Jorge Turner, Victor Avila, Cesar Carrasquilla of the science faculty at the University of Panama and other such renegades who played important parts in the Castro infiltration of Latin American universities, detailed in a series written a year ago by this writer, all showed up in the Jan. 10 assault.

"Yet the State Department first told newsmen there were no immediate indications of a Castro or Communist tie-in and suggested analysts play down any Sino-Soviet involvement to avoid disturbing U.S.-Soviet relations."

Mr. Taylor then asks:

"In the sacred name of security of the United States, what's going on here?

"Month and month throughout 1962, published accounts gave chapter and verse on the Soviet missile build-up in Cuba--their location, the ships that carried them, the names of five Soviet generals in command, etc.--at the very time our government was violently denying any evidence of this until--suddenly--we had the Oct. 22 confrontation with Khrushchev..."

Mr. Taylor adds:

"Now, this isn't a sand-lot ball game we're playing in around the world, repeatedly getting tagged out at first base and falling flat on our faces. Our entire future is at stake.

"And the incredible pattern of official misinformation and surprises and the endless denials of the undeniable would be utterly impossible unless the Soviet had infiltrated our government, as proven in numerous other Western countries."

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The several hundred potential security risks, who may still be employed by the State Department, need not all be card-carrying Communists. Fellow-travelers, who agree with Communist ideology, can be dangerous as any Soviet or Castro agents.

The security doubts which have been raised, coupled with the repeated failures of our foreign policies around the world, have undermined confidence in the State Department and related agencies. It would be incredible if it was otherwise in view of the recent disclosures regarding State Department operations.

Certainly, the disclosures and reports must be investigated fairly but thoroughly.

The radical left and others who might cry "witch hunt" or "Red herring" must be ignored. Our national survival may well be at stake. Nor is there room for playing politics in this critical matter.

President Johnson owes it to the American people to call for a sweeping investigation of any infiltration of Communist spies or fellow-travelers in our government. And the State Department should be the starting point.